4: Oberg E-5 (1949) 1953
SP17 Nambicuara SP17

subsistence activities. For instance, they say that they eat the blossoms of certain plants and a great number of grubs, larvae, and insects. A favorite dish is to crush in a mortar manioc cakes with boiled beans, broiled meat, ants, palm nuts, monkey and bird bones.

As an example of the variety of uses to which the Nambicuara can put a plant we can take the buriti palm: (1) They eat the pulp surrounding the scaly covered nut. (2) They use the fibers from the new growth to make twine. (3) They use the tough, flexible cortex of the frond stalk for making baskets. (4) They fell the buriti so that a certain variety of grub can collect and multiply in the starchy pith in the heart of the tree. The grubs or larvae they then eat uncooked. (5) The dried frond stalks are tied into bundles and used as floats for crossing rivers. In addition, the buriti palm has male associations, for only men can prepare its products. When a male child dies a piece of buriti fiber is left over his grave.

The Nambicuara make fire by the drill method. They cut two round pieces of dry stick about 18 inches in length and three-quarters of an inch in diameter from some bush that has a soft pithy center. The lower stick is split and into the flat side shallow notches are cut to hold the drill in place. The drilling stick is then inserted into the notch while the lower stick is held in place by the toes of the man as he squats over it. He then begins to twirl the stick between his palms, pressing downward. As his hands reach the bottom, he quickly brings them to the top and continues drilling until the pith in the lower stick loosens into small smouldering balls. These he places into a handful of dry buriti fiber and begins to blow on them until the fiber ignites. About 2 minutes is all that is required to make a fire by this method.

MANUFACTURING

The material equipment of the Eastern Nambicuara is extremely simple. Many items, such as the conical trap for catching fish, the floats for crossing rivers, the loom for weaving arm bands, and the mortar and pestle for crushing food products are made for the occasion and are discarded when the task is completed or when the people move. The small grater and the few gourd vessels, small baskets, and twine, the woman carries

[p. 92(B)]